

Special rating areas will require to be considered for the repayment of capital and operating costs of this scheme.

The second contract for the straightening and widening of an additional length of the Pongakawa River south of the railway has been let and completed during the year. This additional length consisted of 55 chains. Approval was also given to the request of the settlers to let a third contract of 92 chains which brought the improved channel up to the old coach road. This was also undertaken by the same contractor and has been completed. The carrying-out of this work in the upper part of the Pongakawa River is expected to result in some considerable silting in the length below the railway, and as it is not likely to ease off much for a year or more it has been necessary to hold over the redredging of the lower reaches of the river.

The work of removing silt from the Wharere Canal was continued with the use of the RB. 19 drag-line excavator. During the year 185 chains of channel were improved. This work is lessening the tendency for seepage into lower areas of the Wharere Block, although the main purpose is to prevent spillover in flood-time.

Maintenance work consisted of the normal drain-cleaning by hand labour. The total length cleaned for the twelve months ended 31st March was 37 miles 19 chains. This work was all done on a contract basis.

Expenditure and Rates.—Expenditure on maintenance for the year amounted to £1,597.

Rates struck : Special, £765 ; general, £1,608.

Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £716 ; general, £1,548.

POUKAWA DRAINAGE AREA (15,567 ACRES), HAWKE'S BAY

Maintenance-work was carried out during the year, and I am indebted to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Napier, for the preparation and inspection of drain-cleaning contracts and payments made to contractors.

Expenditure and Rates.—Maintenance expenditure charged against the Rate Account for the year amounted to £517.

Rates struck : Special, £1,002 ; general, £312.

Rates collected, including arrears : Special, £642 ; general, £197.

During the year, charging-orders for outstanding Maori rates have been granted in most cases by the Maori Land Court in respect of rates unpaid during previous years. An area of land on which a major sum of Maori rates is levied each year and in respect of which default in payment of rates has been made, owing to the land not being in production, is now leased to a European lessee, and a condition of the lease is that current rates be paid as they fall due.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

A statement of accounts is published in parliamentary paper B-1 [Pt. IV].

STAFF

I wish to thank the officers of the Ministry of Works for their co-operation during the year, and also make special reference to Mr. E. Taylor, who has retired from the position of Chief Drainage Engineer. He was associated with drainage projects during the greater part of his career in the Public Service, during which time he came to be held in very high regard by members of the staff and settlers alike.

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